Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan, Vol. 12, No. 4, November 2023

Revitalizing Learning Concentration: Exploring Ice-Breaking Techniques to Improve Reading Proficiency in Elementary School

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Abstract

This research aims to increase students' learning concentration in learning to read in class III elementary schools by applying the ice-breaking technique. This classroom action research was carried out over two cycles. Data was collected through observation, questionnaires, interviews and documentation. The research results show that the use of ice-breaking techniques is effective in increasing students' learning concentration. The questionnaire showed an increase in concentration from "poor" in the initial stage to "very good" in the second cycle. Observations of student activities also showed a significant increase from "poor" to "very good" in the second cycle. This research has important implications in the educational context, namely that teachers can utilize ice-breaking techniques to increase learning effectiveness and create a positive classroom environment. Although there are several limitations to this study, the results provide an important contribution to the educational context and provide a basis for further research.

Keywords: *Ice Breaking Techniques, Learning Concentration*

Introduction

Education is important in forming a competent and qualified generation (Dewi, 2019; Soraya, 2020). The school environment becomes the main place students obtain formal education and interact with educators. Teachers have a central role in directing students towards academic success, which will impact the country's progress in the future (Lubis, 2014; Djollong, 2017; Jabri et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers need to actively build students' interest and concentration in the learning process.

The effectiveness of the learning process depends largely on the level of interest and concentration of students in the material taught (Amiruddin et al., 2021; Piccoli et al., 2001; Pham, 2021; Hodges et al., 2020; Winarto et al., 2020). Student interest in learning materials significantly influences the learning outcomes achieved. Interested students will be more proactive in expressing opinions, appear active and enthusiastic, and be highly curious about the subject matter. Conversely, lack of interest in learning can result in unfocus, unwillingness to perform, and loss of enthusiasm in the learning process.

In the learning environment, especially in the classroom, the teacher is central to creating an interesting learning atmosphere and avoiding conditions of lack of concentration. Teachers are not only conveyors of information but must also have classroom management skills so students can focus on learning. Creating a fun and interesting environment is a challenge in

increasing the effectiveness of learning, especially in overcoming the constraints of low concentration.

Learning concentration that involves concentrating students' minds and attention on the information conveyed during learning is a key factor in learning success (Supriatna et al., 2021; Margiathi et al., 2023; Hermawati et al., 2023; Ancient, 2019; Gilakjani &; Ahmadi, 2011; Walker, 1996; Weinstein, 1988; Patricia Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). However, various factors can affect a student's concentration level. Students have a limit of about 15 minutes, after which their concentration may decrease, characterized by boredom, boredom, and unfocus. This condition indicates the importance of developing learning strategies that can maintain student concentration in an optimal period.

This research was initiated by the challenge of low concentration found in the learning process at SDN 30 Rumaju. Initial observations in grade III in November 2022 revealed that students often lose focus during learning, appear disinterested in the material delivered by the teacher, and tend to engage in other activities that interfere with learning. Factors such as less interactive teaching methods and lack of variety in learning can cause students to feel bored, lack enthusiasm, and lose focus.

The ice-breaking technique is a potential solution, given the importance of increasing students' concentration and interest in learning. This technique can break the ice, increase student motivation, and create a pleasant learning atmosphere. Therefore, this study aims to explore the application of ice-breaking techniques in increasing the concentration of grade III students of SDN 30 Rumaju in learning reading skills.

Method

This research is a class action research. The study subjects were grade III students of State Elementary School 30 Rumaju, totalling 17 students, consisting of 10 male and seven female students. This study lasted two months, namely July and August of the 2023/2024 school year. Research lasts two cycles, each consisting of planning, execution, observation, and reflection.

Data collection techniques in this study used observation techniques, questionnaires, interviews, and documentation techniques. The instruments used in this study were observation sheets, questionnaires, and documentation.

The data in this study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The data analysis techniques used in this study are qualitative and quantitative, which are compared in each cycle. The data analyzed are questionnaires and observation data on teacher and student activities.

The average score indicators of student learning concentration results are categorized into five as stated by Sugiyono, namely 0-46 (Less Once), 47-60 (Less), 61-73 (Enough), 74-85 (Good), 86-100 (Very Good). This action research is considered to meet the average score if it has reached 86 – 100 in the very good category.

Results

Pre Cycle

Pre-cycle activities aim to evaluate students' initial concentration level before they accept action. Most students have difficulty maintaining focus during teacher-guided learning, and some even look sleepy. Some students even engage in other activities, such as drawing in notebooks, going in and out of class, and some students talking to their classmates. This situation negatively affects the indicators of learning concentration. It seems that students pay less attention to the material taught by the teacher, have difficulty actively participating, and it is difficult to maintain focus during the learning process.

In addition, students' interest in following learning seems to be short-lived. They show signs of boredom and boredom. Researchers have conducted surveys on the concentration level of student learning during the learning process to collect data. The teacher has also made observations and filled out observation sheets about student activities in class III.

Table 1. Results of the Pre-Cycle Learning Concentration Questionnaire

No	Respond	Scale Score Student Concentration	Category
1.	AA	52	Less
2.	HH	51	Less
3.	IV	58	Less
4.	IRP	45	Less Than Once
5.	MR	48	less
6.	BUT	51	less
7.	BUT	45	Less Than Once
8.	Not much	51	Less
9.	MFN	48	less
10.	MH	55	less
11.	MT	51	less
12.	ON	51	less
13.	NL	44	Less Than Once
14.	NH	51	less
15.	NAT	51	less
16.	PA	49	less
17.	PS	47	Less
Sum		848	Less

Table 2. Results of Observation of Student Learning Activities in the Pre-Cycle

No	Respond	Score score	Category
1.	AA	47,05	Less
2.	HH	45,88	Very less
3.	IV	45,88	Less Than Once
4.	IRP	51,76	Less
5.	MR	45,88	Less Than Once
6.	BUT	49,41	Less
7.	BUT	47,05	Less
8.	Not much	50,58	Less
9.	MFN	49,41	Less

10.	MH	48,23	Less
11.	MT	44,70	Less Than Once
12.	ON	49,41	Less
13.	NL	47,05	Less
14.	NH	47,05	Less
15.	ON	51,76	Less
16.	PA	54,11	Less
17.	PS	51,76	Less
Sum		827,05	Less

Cycle I

The first cycle in this study consists of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The first cycle is designed with pre-cycle results in mind.

1. Planning

The planning stage in the first cycle has the objective of preparing everything necessary for the implementation of research, such as:

a. Teachers and researchers collaborate to develop Learning Implementation Plans (RPP).
b. Teachers and researchers collaborate to prepare learning resources and learning materials.
c. Researchers prepare research instruments, such as teacher activity observation sheets, student activity observation sheets, and questionnaires for students.
d. Researchers act as observers and teachers as implementers of actions.

2. Action Execution

The execution of actions is carried out twice. Each action is divided into three activities, namely, the initial activity, the core activity, and the final activity. The following is an overview of activities at the two meetings:

Initial Activities:

a. Each meeting begins with the teacher giving a greeting, followed by a joint prayer led by the class leader. Teachers also check student readiness, attendance, and neatness before starting learning. During the initial stage, the teacher explains the learning objectives to be carried out.

Core Activities:

a. In the core stage of learning, the teacher provides instruction to the students. Teachers also implement interactive chants to boost student morale. Although some students responded enthusiastically, some did not respond. The teacher then performs an apperception by discussing the benefits of reading and introducing fairy tales.
b. While reading this fairy tale, some students may lose concentration or disturb their classmates. However, teachers use the "Pat Love Literacy" technique to restore students' attention and ensure they refocus on the learning material.

Final Activities:

a. The final stage of learning begins with the teacher distributing questionnaires of student learning concentration. Students are given guidance by their peers when filling

out this questionnaire. After that, the teacher reinforces the material that has been delivered and asks questions to students who still do not understand.

b. Furthermore, reflection with students is carried out about the learning that has been done in class. Teachers give psychological encouragement to students to continue studying at home and always worship. Finally, the learning ends with ice-breaking, prayer together, and greetings.

Thus, the implementation of actions in these two meetings consists of the initial stage, the core stage, and the final stage, focusing on the application of ice-breaking techniques in learning reading skills in grade III. During both meetings, the activities of teachers and students were carefully observed by researchers according to the instruments that had been prepared.

Table 3. Results of the First Cycle Learning Concentration Questionnaire

No	Respond	Student Concentration Scale Scores	Category
1.	AA	63	Enough
2.	HH	72	Enough
3.	IV	65	Enough
4.	IRP	70	Enough
5.	MR	70	Enough
6.	BUT	66	Enough
7.	BUT	73	Enough
8.	Not much	73	Enough
9.	MFN	71	Enough
10.	MH	71	Enough
11.	MT	67	Enough
12.	ON	78	Good
13.	NL	74	Good
14.	NH	69	Enough
15.	ON	73	Enough
16.	PA	0	-
17.	PS	71	Enough
Sum		1126	Enough

The questionnaire data on the level of student learning concentration in cycle one was calculated and obtained results of 66.23 or in the sufficient category.

3. Observation

At this stage, the researcher observes the implementation of actions. Learning activities carried out by teachers and learning students are observed in such a way. The following are the results of observations of teacher classroom activities in cycle I action.

Tabel 4. Hasil Observasi Aktivitas Guru dalam Kelas

No	Activities	Valuation	
		TL	TTL
A.	Introductory Activities	✓	
	1. Say greetings and be answered by learners.	✓	
	2. Conduct learning attendance.	✓	
	3. Invite all students to pray to begin the learning activity.	✓	

	4. Do *ice-breaking* at the beginning of learning.		✓
	5. The teacher asked about the material learned at the last meeting.		✓
	6. The teacher conveys the learning objectives to be achieved by the material to be taught.	✓	
B.	Core Activities		
	1. According to the material taught, teachers use this type of ice-breaking in the learning process.	✓	
	2. Teachers use the right type of *ice breaking* at the required learning time as in the core of learning.		✓
	3. Teachers use this type of *ice-breaking* spontaneously when students look bored, even when playing with deskmates.		✓
	4. Teachers create learning in the classroom from passive to active by using the type of *ice breaking.*		✓
	5. Teachers use and create variations in applause to improve concentration during learning activities.	✓	
	6. Teachers use a type of *ice*-breaking body movement during the learning process.	✓	
C.	Concluding Activities		
	1. The teacher reflects on the material presented.	✓	
	2. The teacher performs *the closing ice-breaking* technique to end the learning activity.	✓	
	3. The teacher invites students together to make conclusions.	✓	
	4. The teacher directs students to pray and say greetings.	✓	

Information:
TL: Done

TTL: Not Executed

Based on the table above, learning reading skills using ice-breaking techniques has not been maximized. This can be seen from several indicators not implemented in cycle I.

Table 5. Results of Observation of Student Activities in the First Cycle

No	Respondents	Score score	Category
1.	AA	55,29	Less
2.	HH	62,35	Enough
3.	IV	69,41	Enough
4.	IRP	72,94	Enough
5.	MR	64,70	Enough
6.	BUT	80	Good
7.	BUT	72,94	Enough
8.	Not much	63,52	Enough
9.	MFN	70,58	Enough
10.	MH	72,94	Enough
11.	MT	67,05	Enough
12.	ON	76,47	Good
13.	NL	77,64	Good
14.	NH	61,71	Enough
15.	ON	71,64	Enough
16.	PA	0	-
17.	PS	68,23	Enough
Sum		1107,05	Enough

Meanwhile, student activity observation data in the first cycle obtained an average score of 65.12, which illustrates that observation of student learning activities in the category is sufficient but still needs to be improved to get the desired results.

4. Reflection

After cycle 1, which includes planning, implementation, and observation, reflection is carried out to evaluate all stages in cycle 1. Based on questionnaire data, the level of student learning concentration in cycle 1 obtained results of 66.23 or in the sufficient category. Meanwhile, the observation data of student activity in the first cycle obtained an average score of 65.12, also in the sufficient category. In contrast, the results of observation of teacher activity in the classroom were considered not optimal due to several poorly implemented indicators.

By the findings of the first cycle, the results still do not meet the success indicators, which are reaching a value of 86 – 100 with a very good category, then the action will be continued in cycle II.

Cycle II

1. Planning Cycle II

Cycle II is carried out to improve the first cycle to meet the success category regarding student learning concentration and student and teacher activities in learning. Therefore, cycle II is well planned. The following is the planning for cycle II prepared by researchers:

1) Teachers and researchers collaboratively re-develop a lesson plan (RPP) about the material.
2) Prepare research instruments in the form of teacher activity observation sheets, student activity observation sheets and questionnaires for students.
3) Researchers prepare learning resources and learning materials.

2. Implementation of Cycle II

The second cycle of this study consists of two meetings and the first cycle.

Initial Activities:

1) Each meeting begins with the teacher giving a greeting, followed by a joint prayer led by the class leader.
2) Teachers immediately use the ice-breaking "Smart Teacher, I Think, I Think, I Can" as a way to start learning with excitement.
3) Teachers also check student attendance and classroom hygiene before learning begins.

Core Activities:

1) The teacher divides the students into three groups, with groups one consisting of 5 students and 2 and 3 comprising 6 students each.
2) The teacher starts by giving the song "If You Like the Heart," whose verse has been changed to increase students' enthusiasm for learning.
3) Teachers do apperception by asking about students' reading preferences, what books they read, and the benefits of reading. The teacher explains the learning objectives to be achieved on that day.
4) The teacher then coordinates the students to participate in an interactive model of yelling.
5) The teacher gives explanations of good reading techniques and intensive reading.

6) Students read the text of the fairy tale story "Fairy Tale of the Deer" with enthusiasm, mainly because there are pictures that attract their attention in the story.
7) The teacher also asked students to create an interactive yelling model that increased their concentration and enthusiasm for learning.
8) The teacher swiftly overcame students who seemed to lose concentration by using spontaneous ice-breaking, namely "Pat Love Literacy,"
9) Students are tasked to work on problems related to fairy tale texts in groups.
10) The teacher observes the students working cohesively, and the students explain the results of their answers with great concentration.
11) The teacher also tests the students' understanding by asking, and the students answer with excitement.

Final Activities:

1) The teacher reinforces the material that has been delivered.
2) Reflection with students about the learning that has been done in class.
3) Teachers give psychological encouragement to students to continue studying at home and always worship.
4) The learning ended by doing ice breaking by playing exciting and entertaining games.
5) The teacher closes the learning by reading prayers together and greetings.

Thus, both meetings in this second cycle focus on increasing student concentration, enthusiasm for learning, and positive interaction during the learning process. During both meetings, the activities of teachers and students were carefully observed by researchers according to the instruments that had been prepared.

Table 6. Results of the Second Cycle Student Learning Concentration Questionnaire

No	Respond	Student Concentration Scale Scores	Category
1.	AA	83	Good
2.	HH	84	Good
3.	IV	90	That is very nice
4.	IRP	84	Good
5.	MR	84	Good
6.	BUT	89	That is very nice
7.	BUT	86	That is very nice
8.	Not much	82	Good
9.	MFN	80	Good
10.	MH	90	That is very nice
11.	MT	91	That is very nice
12.	ON	87	That is very nice
13.	NL	84	Good
14.	NH	87	That is very nice
15.	ON	82	Good
16.	PA	83	Good
17.	PS	88	That is very nice
Sum		1454	That is very nice

The questionnaire results on the level of student concentration in cycle II were 85.52, with a very good category.

3. Observation

Data from observations of teacher and student activities during the second cycle action process are in the following table.

Table 7. Observation Results of Teacher Activities

No	Activities	Valuation	
		TL	TTL
A.	Introductory Activities	√	
	1. Say greetings and be answered by learners.	√	
	2. Conduct learning attendance.	√	
	3. Invite all students to pray to begin the learning activity.	√	
	4. Do *ice-breaking* at the beginning of learning.	√	
	5. The teacher asked about the material learned at the last meeting.	√	
	6. The teacher conveys the learning objectives to be achieved by the material to be taught.	√	
B.	Core Activities		
	1. According to the material taught, teachers use this type of ice-breaking in the learning process.	√	
	2. Teachers use the right type of ice breaking at the required learning time as in the core of learning.	√	
	3. Teachers use this type of *ice-breaking* spontaneously when students look bored, even when playing with deskmates.	√	
	4. Teachers create learning in the classroom from passive to active by using the type of *ice breaking.*	√	
	5. Creating learning from passive to active	√	
	6. Teachers use and create variations in applause to improve concentration during learning activities.	√	
	7. Teachers use a type of *ice*-breaking body movement during the learning process.	√	
C.	Concluding Activities		
	1. The teacher reflects on the material presented.	√	
	2. The teacher performs *the closing ice-breaking* technique to end the learning activity.	√	
	3. The teacher invites students together to make conclusions.	√	
	4. The teacher directs students to pray and say greetings.	√	

Information:
TL: Done

TTL: Not Executed

Based on the table data above, learning reading skills using *ice-breaking techniques in* grade III students of SDN 30 Rumaju has been carried out well reviewed in the assessment indicators.

Table 8. Results of Observation of Student Activities in Cycle II

No	Respond	Value Score	Category
1.	AA	93,52	That is very nice
2.	HH	83,52	Good
3.	IV	81,17	Good
4.	IRP	88,82	That is very nice
5.	MR	83,52	Good
6.	BUT	85,88	Good
7.	BUT	88,23	That is very nice
8.	Not much	85,88	Good
9.	MFN	89,41	That is very nice
10.	MH	85,88	Good
11.	MT	87,05	That is very nice
12.	ON	91,76	That is very nice
13.	NL	87,05	That is very nice
14.	NH	84,70	Good
15.	ON	91,17	That is very nice
16.	PA	92,35	That is very nice
17.	PS	88,23	That is very nice
	Sum	1488,24	That is very nice

Observation data on student activities in the second cycle obtained an average score of **87.54**, illustrating that student learning activities are in the Very Good category.

4. Refleksi

The implementation of cycle II includes planning, implementation, observation, and reflection to evaluate all stages in cycle II. Based on questionnaire data, the level of student learning concentration in cycle II obtained results of 85.52 or was in the very good category. Meanwhile, the observation data of student activity in the second cycle obtained an average score of 87.54, also in the very good category. In contrast, the results of observation of teacher activity in the classroom have carried out all assessment indicators to maximize the results.

Discussion

The results showed significant student learning concentration development over two action cycles. In the pre-cycle, it can be seen that most students have difficulty maintaining focus, but after applying ice-breaking techniques in cycles I and II, the concentration level of student learning increases significantly. This can be seen from the increase in student learning concentration questionnaire scores from the "less" category in the pre-cycle to "very good" in the second cycle. Observation of student activity also showed a significant improvement, with students increasingly active and participating in learning.

The study's main objective was to improve students' learning concentration through ice-breaking techniques. The results of this study clearly show that the use of ice-breaking techniques is effective in achieving this goal. Students who initially had difficulty maintaining

focus and boredom during learning managed to improve their concentration after applying ice-breaking techniques. Therefore, this study has succeeded in achieving the goals that have been set.

The results of this study are in line with findings in the literature that suggest that ice-breaking techniques can improve student learning concentration (Marzatifa et al., 2021; MILA INDRAWATI, 2019; Fajarudin et al., 2021; Puspitasari & Marzuki, 2023; Ismi et al., 2021). Previous research has also shown that interactive techniques such as ice-breaking can increase student motivation and engagement in learning. These findings are consistent with the results of this study, which showed an increase in students' learning concentration after applying ice-breaking techniques.

This research has important implications in the context of education. Ice-breaking techniques can help teachers improve student learning concentration so that learning becomes more effective. Teachers can utilize these techniques to start learning with excitement, overcome student burnout, and create an interactive and positive classroom environment. In addition, this study's results can also encourage schools and teachers to apply learning methods that involve active student interaction.

Although this study gave positive results, there are some limitations to note. First, the study was only conducted in one class at one school, so generalizing the findings needs to be done carefully. Second, the measurement of learning concentration only uses questionnaires and observations, so additional measurement methods, such as cognitive tests, can add validity to the results. In addition, outside factors such as family support and home learning environment can also affect a student's learning concentration and need to be considered in further research.

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be put forward for future research. First, similar studies can be conducted with larger samples and school variations to test the generalizability of the findings. Second, research can consider external factors such as family support and learning environment to understand the impact of ice-breaking techniques more deeply. Lastly, research can explore ice-breaking techniques in the context of learning different subjects and with more comprehensive measurement methods.

Conclusion

The use of ice-breaking techniques in reading learning is effective in increasing student learning concentration. In Cycle I, the score increased to 66.23; in Cycle II, it reached 83.76. The results of observations of student activities before the action showed a value of 48.65 in the category "Less." However, in Cycle I, student activity increased to 65.12 in the "Enough" category, and in Cycle II, student learning activity reached 87.54 in the "Very Good" category. This research stopped after Cycle II because achieving results at this stage already met the success criteria in increasing student learning concentration during the application of ice-breaking techniques at SDN 30 Rumaju. This research supports findings in the literature on the importance of using interactive techniques in learning. The implication is that teachers can utilize ice-breaking techniques to increase learning effectiveness and create a positive classroom environment. Although this study has some limitations, the results make an important contribution to the educational context and provide a basis for further research.

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